

The Province of Meribah recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Richard Harold HARTZ**, of the Chaminade Mineola Community, Mineola (NY), United States, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 15, 2025, in Mineola (NY), United States, at the age of 83 with 64 years of religious profession.

Article 8 of our **Rule of Life** exhorts each member of the Society of Mary to imitate the virtues of Mary and concludes “We hope to reflect to those around us Mary’s warmth of welcome to God and to others. Like her, we wholly commit ourselves to the mystery of our vocation.” For nearly sixty-five years, Bro. Richard lived a life of whole-hearted commitment to our Marianist vocation and of warm-hearted embrace of profound relationships with God and the countless people he encountered through his life as a Marianist religious.

Richard Harold Hartz was born on February 15, 1942, in Laurelton, NY, to David and Julia (Miller) Hartz, the eldest of three children. From an early age he expressed a desire to be a teacher and a religious. His younger sister Lorraine recalled Richard teaching her to count to 100 in German on the front stoop of their home and the two of them riding their bicycles together to their parish church to attend Holy Week services each year. As high school drew near, Richard did not know very much about nearby Chaminade High School, but as he recalled many years later, “I felt that Mary was calling me to go there.”

In September of 1955, Richard enrolled at Chaminade High School in Mineola, and except for five years of initial formation, spent the rest of his Marianist life in service to the community and school there. He professed his first vows on August 22, 1960, at Marcy NY, and his perpetual vows on August 21, 1965, at Beacon, NY. Upon completing his scholasticate and collegiate studies in Dayton, Ohio, Bro. Richard was assigned to the Chaminade-Mineola community to teach German at his alma mater. In those days it was unusual for a young brother to be assigned so close to his home, but that was the first sign that Bro. Richard’s relationship with the Marianist Family in Mineola was to be exceptional.

Bro. Richard taught German (along with brief stints of Latin, religion, and Spanish) from 1965 until 2020. He served as moderator of the alumni association from 1978 to 2018. For decades, he was the chief photographer and chronicler of events at Chaminade, editing the monthly newsletter and attending countless events with a camera around his neck. As director of development and alumni relations from 1994 until 2018, Bro. Richard spearheaded efforts that expanded Chaminade’s facilities and provided scholarships for thousands of students.

Bro. Richard’s greatest accomplishment, however, was the “warmth of welcome” he extended to thousands of Chaminade alumni and their families and the life-long

relationships he forged with them. His ability to recall names, family details, and German grades was legendary. Dick Kearns, a student in one of Bro Richard's first classes, spoke for many alumni when he recalled: "Bro Richard shared an amazing 60-year relationship with me, my two sons, and three grandsons at Chaminade. My favorite teacher at Chaminade became a close and dear friend of my wife Mo and me, attending every important family event over the years. He was family. After a year of Latin with Bro Richard, he suggested I should consider taking German for my second language. I responded with the classic sophomore wise crack of "and where would I ever use German?" Thirty-seven years later when I informed the community that I accepted a job in Switzerland and would be moving to Zurich, Bro Richard was the first to respond with that wry smile: 'You should have listened to me when I told you to take German.' As usual, he was right!"

Throughout his life, Bro. Richard was devoted to his German heritage. During studies and travels in Europe during the 1960s and 70s, he formed close relationships with many brothers in the province of Austria-Germany. Through them he learned of the heroic witness of Fr. Jakob Gapp, and he became an ardent promoter of his cause in the English-speaking world, translating his biography and serving as the editor of the English translations of Blessed Jakob's letters.

In community, he loved to carry on the traditions that the first German-speaking Marianists had brought with them to the United States. Birthdays and jubilees were celebrated with a rousing chorus of "*Zum Leben hoch*." Each Christmas Eve he would lead the brothers in three verses of "*O Tannenbaum*." In his homily at Bro. Richard's funeral, Fr. Thomas Cardone shared that, "Hartzie," as he was known in community, "loved to cook and bake the closely guarded German recipes he had learned from his mother. Like hers, his vegetables were always creamed. There would be *Apfelstrudel* every autumn and *Weihnachtsstollen* studded with candied fruits at Christmas. In the summer he would make an elaborate Austrian fruit tart, baked in special pans he had carried home from Linz, whose name was so difficult to pronounce that we called it simply Hartzie-cake." More profoundly, Fr. Thomas shared that it was Bro. Richard who first invited him to consider a Marianist vocation.

Bro. Stephen Balletta also reflected on his spirit of welcome and invitation: "What image comes to mind right away when I think of Bro. Richard? His absolute delight in the people he knew. I remember that big smile and that warm, welcoming voice whenever a graduate would return to school. He took the same evident delight in our younger brothers in formation. 'Hi, Pat.' 'Hi, Peter.' 'Hi, Michael,' he would exclaim with a lilt in his eye. Bro. Richard was all about generativity. He was always encouraging – even cheering for – the next generation, and the next, and the next, and the next."

Bro. Richard committed his life wholly to Mary and her mission. He lived his life with warmth, dedication, enthusiasm, and generosity in a unique and unforgettable way. Bro. Michael McAward summed up the meaning of that life:

For generations, Bro. Richard has been identified with the mission of the school and the life of the Marianist community. Rarely the center of attention, but always at the center, attending to details and extending a welcome to alumni, students, parents, religious, and guests. His more than 60 years of teaching German and his decades of dedication to other responsibilities showcased his great respect for stability and perseverance, as well as love for his craft and his vocation. His sense of humor, including the ability to laugh at himself, served him well, but he always got the last word. Of that, you could be sure!

I doubt that anyone who has ever met Bro. Richard will forget him anytime soon. I surely will never forget him. I am also convinced that he will not forget any of us and will now intercede for us all from his heavenly banquet, filled with alumni, strudel, and creamed vegetables!